

## DISPLAY FOR A CASKET SELECTION ROOM

### Field of the Invention

This invention relates generally to the funeral service industry, and more particularly to a display system facilitating the selection by a customer of a casket in a funeral home selection room.

### 5     Background of the Invention

Funeral home casket selection rooms have evolved as those in the industry have attempted to better meet the funeral customers' needs. The "traditional" presentation of product in a funeral home selection room was to simply place each casket on a bier and open the head end cap or lid of the

10     casket to permit viewing inside the casket. As many caskets as possible were displayed in a selection room in order to maximize the number of product choices for the customer. Unfortunately, such a "traditional" presentation

results in what has been referred to as a "sea of caskets" visual effect, which can be both distressing or alarming and confusing to the customer.

Advances in the design of funeral home selection rooms have taken the form of providing a plurality of alcove structures, either of a

5 "modular" construction or of a "stick built" construction, in the funeral home selection room. Each alcove structure includes a vertical back wall and a pair of vertical, spaced apart wing walls cooperating with the back wall to form an alcove. A soffit may span the upper front edges of the wing walls, and lighting, for example track lighting, may be incorporated into the soffit. A two-  
10 tier casket rack is located within the alcove, the lower tier of the casket rack being a roll out rack permitting the lower casket to be rolled out from under the upper casket and the casket lid opened for display of the lower casket. Tasteful signage and the like is mounted on the back wall above the caskets. Such a construction, which is the subject of the assignee's prior U.S. Patents  
15 Nos. 5,405,017 and 5,524,394, both hereby incorporated by reference herein, increases the number of caskets which can be displayed in a funeral home selection room, as well as greatly improves the "look and feel" of the casket presentations, thereby reducing the clutter and confusion of the so-called "sea of caskets" effect and providing a feeling of comfort to the families.

20 New construction and renovation costs being what they are, there is an ever-increasing need to increase the product density displayable in the funeral home selection room, without sacrificing comfort, convenience and look and feel of the casket display systems of U.S. Patents Nos. 5,405,017 and

5,524,394. To that end, the assignee's U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/911,823, hereby incorporated by reference herein, discloses and claims a Display For A Casket Selection And/Or Viewing Room. That application discloses the display of a plurality of casket portions along with a plurality of casket information modules. Each information module corresponds to one of the casket portions displayed and houses an insert displaying samples of the various features of the particular casket, for example, a portion of the cap panel, a photo of the casket, a fabric swatch of the casket fabric, etc. To access and view the casket samples displayed on the insert, a door to the module must be opened, and the insert must be slid out of the module.

It is desirable to provide still further improvements in the area of casket display and selection.

#### Summary of the Invention

The present invention is a display for a casket selection room comprising a wall; a plurality of casket portions displayed on the wall, the plurality of casket portions representing a plurality of casket choices from which a customer may select; and a plurality of casket information modules displayed on the wall, each of the information modules corresponding to one of the plurality of casket portions and including at least one of a photo of the casket, a portion of a cap panel of the casket and a fabric swatch of the casket, the photo, portion of the cap panel or fabric swatch being visible to the customer without opening the information module.

The casket portion and corresponding information module can be secured to a support, and the support can be secured to the wall.

5 The wall can include at least one horizontal groove therein, and the support can include a first bracket mounted thereto which is received in the groove in the wall.

The support can include a second bracket mounted thereto and the information module can include an opening which receives the bracket mounted to the support.

10 The support can be L-shaped having a leg portion and a foot portion, the casket portion can be a casket corner having first and second side portions abutting the leg and foot portions, respectively of the support and the information module can abut the leg portion of the support.

15 The support can further include a portion connecting the leg and foot portions, and the casket corner can be supported atop the connecting portion.

The information module can include first, second and third pockets containing a photo of the casket, a portion of a cap panel of the casket and a fabric swatch of the casket.

20 The casket selection display of the present invention thereby provides further advantages above and beyond the casket selection display disclosed in U.S. Application Serial No. 08/911,823, for example obviating the need to open a door of the casket information module and remove the casket information insert in order to be able to view the same.

These and other advantages of the present invention will become more readily apparent during the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the drawings herein, in which:

Brief Description of the Drawings

5                    Fig. 1 is a perspective view of the casket selection display of the present invention;

                    Fig. 2 is an exploded perspective view of the display of Fig. 1; and

                    Fig. 3 is a view taken along line 3-3 of Fig. 1.

10                   Detailed Description of the Invention

                    Referring first to Figs. 1 and 2, there is illustrated a display 10 according to the principles of the present invention. The display 10 can be installed in the selection room of a funeral home for facilitating the selection of a casket by a customer or a family member. The display 10 can include a wall 15 20, and a plurality of casket portions 30, supports 40 and information modules 50.

                    Wall 20 can include a plurality of horizontal grooves 202 therein. Grooves 202 could be formed into an existing room wall 20, or wall 20 could be in addition to an existing room wall. For example, wall 20 can be 20 a commercially available product known as "Slat Wall", available from Marlite of Dover, Ohio. In that case the Slat Wall wall 20 can be mounted to a sheet of plywood (not shown) with screws (not shown), and the plywood can be adhesively secured to existing dry wall (not shown) with an adhesive (not

shown). In the case of an existing masonry wall (not shown), the plywood can be attached thereto with appropriate masonry screws (not shown).

Each casket portion 30 represents a casket choice from which the customer or family member may select. In other words, each of the casket portions 30 can be of a different color, material, finish and/or include different hardware styles. The casket portions 30 can take one or more of many forms. As one example, a casket portion 30 can be a short quarter section of a casket showing half of an end wall and an end portion of a side wall of the casket. As another example, a casket portion 30 can be a short length of the casket side wall. As yet another example, a casket portion 30 can be a short length of the entire end of the casket. It will thus be appreciated that many different configurations of casket portions may be displayed on the display 10 depending on the positioning of the casket portions 30 and the selection of the actual portion of the casket to be displayed.

Each casket portion 30 can be secured to a respective support 40. Support 40 can be L-shaped having a leg portion 402 and a foot portion 404 interconnected by a connecting portion 406. Casket portion 30 can reside atop connecting portion 406 and be secured to leg and foot portions 402, 404 via screws (not shown), for example. Support 40 can include a bracket 408 on a rear side of leg portion 402 which can be received in groove 202 in wall 20, to thereby removably secure support 40 to wall 20.

Each casket information module 50 can be removably secured to a respective support 40. Support 40 can include a bracket 410 on a front

side of leg portion 402 which is received in an opening 502 in information module 50. Each information module 50 can be fabricated of a transparent material such as acrylic and include a first pocket 504, a second pocket 506 and a third pocket 508. The first pocket 502 can include a photo 510 of the casket, the second pocket 506 can include a portion 512 of the cap panel of the casket and the third pocket 508 can include a fabric swatch 514 of the fabric of the casket. Pockets 506, 508 and cap panel portion 512 and fabric swatch 514 are sized such that customer can readily access the cap panel portion 512 and fabric swatch 514 allowing the customer to touch and feel same. Additionally, cards (not shown) containing printed information can be positioned in the pockets to thereby provide additional information about the casket.

Those skilled in the art will readily recognize numerous adaptations and modifications which can be made to the present invention which will result in an improved selection room display, yet all of which will fall within the spirit and scope of the present invention as defined in the following claims. Accordingly, the invention is to be limited only by the scope of the following claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is: